

Dermatology

Why specialise in Dermatology?

The Christchurch Dermatology department is moving towards providing regional cover for acute and chronic dermatology for the entire South Island. The Department currently has 3 Dermatologists, a Clinical Nurse Specialist and a dedicated Registered Nurse. Two more recently qualified Dermatologists will join the service in early 2026. The Department triages referrals for the entire South Island and delivers a range of outpatient clinics, including adult and paediatric dermatology, medical dermatology, procedural dermatology, and high-risk skin cancer clinic. The Department also provides patch testing, phototherapy, and inpatient consultation services.

Whilst the main clinical focus is on medical dermatology, dermatologic surgery is a vital component of training.

As a regional service provider, outreach clinics across the South Island staffed by SMOs, registrars and nurses provide a unique opportunity to provide specialised dermatologic care to patients with limited access in the South Island.

Career prospects

There are currently shortages of Dermatologists worldwide, including Australia and NZ, and in particular, Health New Zealand is looking to increase the number of Dermatologists working in the public setting.

Medical kaimahi (staff) in our service

The service is staffed by Dermatologists, Dr Aaron Secrest (Clinical Director), Dr Cristina Mello and Dr Roma deShazo. The Clinical Nurse Specialist is Tracy Fenton, and the Registered nurse is Marion Sheenan.

Training in our service

Christchurch has been recently accredited to provide advance training in Dermatology. Advanced training posts are allocated nationally, and trainees need to apply through the national allocation system.

Research

Research is a vital component of training and advancing the field of Dermatology in New Zealand. Through our appointments with the University of Otago, we provide opportunities for registrars to assist on current projects or develop their own projects. As part of the advanced training requirement, registrars are expected to complete at least one research project per training year and are supported to present their research annually at the national dermatology conference and to publish their findings in international journals.

SMO / Kaimahi (staff) support

Our registrars have their own workspaces and work closely with the SMOs on a daily basis. The position is training-focused, and registrars are encouraged and supported to attend regular educational sessions across New Zealand and locally. Trainee initiatives are supported and encouraged.

Dr Aaron Secrest
Clinical Director Dermatology
Email: aaron.secrest@cdhb.health.nz

